

WASHINGTON, DC – U.S. Congressman Allen Boyd (D-North Florida) introduced legislation in the House of Representatives to protect the jobs of Gulf Coast fishermen and enhance the economic benefits the local fishing industry brings to Gulf Coast communities. Boyd's legislation, the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Fishery Protection Act, would require the federal government to submit a detailed analysis on the number of red snapper in the Gulf of Mexico prior to proposing any reductions in the number of days red snapper are able to be fished.

"Our local fishing industry serves as an economic engine for countless Gulf Coast communities, and it is unconscionable to think that these communities are being adversely affected by decisions based on faulty assessments or inaccurate data," said Congressman Boyd. "This legislation will ensure that our fishermen's jobs are protected from any unjust future closures and that the economies of our local coastal communities are never again put in jeopardy because of outdated or incomplete information."

"Our commercial and recreational fishermen depend on the ability to fish, and closing fisheries using inaccurate information is a direct affront to our livelihood," said Bob Jones, executive director of the Southeastern Fisheries Association. "Congressman Boyd has been an unwavering advocate for our community, and this bill is just the latest example of his commitment to protecting the rights of fishermen in our district. I'm proud to have him fighting on our behalf in Washington and told him he has the full support of our members."

The administration recently restricted fishing of red snapper in large areas off Florida's Atlantic coast because of suspected overfishing. Congressman Boyd's legislation would prevent this type of closure from happening again without proper review, accurate information, and justifiable explanation. Boyd's bill calls for a congressional review of the federal government's new restrictions on commercial, recreational, and charter fishing in Florida and requires the federal government to use sound scientific assessments to accurately determine the number of red snapper in the Gulf. Specifically, the legislation:

- Directs the Secretary of Commerce to conduct a study to assess the amount of Red Snapper fish in the Gulf of Mexico Red Snapper Fishery.
- Prohibits the Department of Commerce from decreasing the number of fishing days unless this assessment is done.
- Calls for the study to explicitly demonstrate the need for any reduction in the number of annual fishing days.

Congressman Boyd has a long history of fighting to protect fisherman's rights. Most recently he thwarted the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from imposing harmful new regulations on Gulf oyster production by introducing the Gulf Oyster Protection Act. This legislation helped convince the FDA to abandon its proposal to inhibit oyster harvesting in the Gulf Coast during the months of May to November.

Congressman Boyd concluded: "This legislation is a direct result of the countless conversations I've had with our local fishermen. Many of these hardworking and dedicated individuals traveled by bus from North Florida to Washington just last week, and I was eager to meet with them, listen to their concerns, and discuss ways to prevent their livelihood from being unfairly imposed

upon. I commend them for their commitment and perseverance, and I look forward to working with them to protect their jobs and their right to fish.”

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